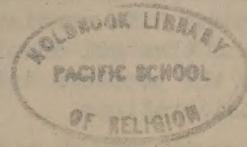


Japan Christian Activity News

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"ONWARD...."

"Let's make our protest together joyfully! Don't let the fearful appearance of the riot police scare you. I think their outfits and equipment were chosen as much for their intimidating effect as for their protective function. But let us be strong in the Lord together. Our cause is just. Our demonstration against the evils of militarism, imperialism and prejudice is one that we can carry on with pride!"

The speaker was a Christian pastor wearing traditional hachimaki (towel tied around his head), usually worn by one preparing to undertake a physical struggle. During the last several years he has been a leader in radical protest movements; he is at the forefront of the current Narita struggle.

On this occasion the pastor, Shigeru Yoshimatsu, of the Oji Kita Church of The United Church of Christ, Tokyo, was addressing some 50 to 60 Christian pastors and laymen assembled as a satellite group to the larger Beheiren rally being held at Sakamoto Park in Tokyo on Thurs., Oct., 21, International Antiwar Day. (Beheiren is a peace movement, originally anti-Vietnam War, that joins intellectuals and citizens in a range of activities. The slogans of the '70 group protested against ratification of the Okinawa reversion treaty; sending Self Defense Forces to Okinawa; Narita International Airport; the proposed new immigration bill.

As the speakers finished and the demonstration began to move, many groups banded together in snakedanced that blocked traffic along the streets--in defiance of the orders of the supervising police. The Christian group, however, marched forward behind a flag with a black cross set in a field of blue gray, and the name, Nanajunen-no-kai ("the '70 group")--a group formed in protest to the holding of Expo '70.

"They look like a body of 'Christian soldiers marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before...'" commented a non-Japanese observer.

The march ended two hours later in the Shimbashi area of Tokyo, although some other participants in the large-scale nation-wide Antiwar Day demonstration that involved hundreds of groups snakedanced and demo'd far into the night.

KOREAN CHURCH IN JAPAN ASSEMBLY SUPPORTS NCRTH/SOUTH TALKS

The hope that "people's interests and rights will be given priority over all political considerations" was voiced in a statement adopted by the Annual Assembly of the Korean Christian Church in Japan and sent to the North and South Korean Red Cross organizations. The Assembly, which elected a new slate of young officers and approved Constitutional changes, met Oct. 12-14 in the newly opened Korean Christian Center at Ikuno in Osaka, dedicated during the Assembly.

(continued)

KOREAN CHURCH IN JAPAN ASSEMBLY SUPPORTS NORTH/SOUTH TALKS (continued)

The statement said that the news of the humanitarian attempts to reunite separated families had brought joy, enthusiasm and encouragement to the 610,000 Koreans who reside in Japan. "The arbitrary division of the country has led to an unnatural style of living not only in the motherland but for those Koreans living overseas," it continued. "We hope therefore that these talks will be continued and that all ideological differences will be overcome by giving priority to the people's interests and rights, which would supersede all political considerations.

The Rev. Mr. Kim Took Sam, 44, of Kumamoto, was elected moderator and two other men in their early 40s were elected vice moderators: the Rev. Mr. Yun Cheng Un, Sakai, and Kim Kwan Soo, a layman of Nagoya. General Secretary In Ha Lee consented to serve another three-year term with the understanding that his successor will be appointed at the 1972 Assembly. Lee indicated his desire to be able to give full time as soon as possible to community and pastoral work in Kawasaki City, where the church he serves is located.

A structural reordering gives the church three divisions--Mission and Evangelism, Education, and Social Action, and supporting departments of finance and personnel. One Constitutional revision provides for mandatory retirement of pastors at age 70; another requires that pastors offer their resignations after six years with the same church, at which time the pastor would be eligible for recall or a new assignment.

CATHOLIC ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE PRACTICES IT

A conference of Roman Catholic district directors of ecumenical activities met Oct. 5-6 in Tokyo with Prof. Yoshinobu Kumazawa of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary and the Rev. Dr. In Ha Lee of the Korean Christian Church in Japan as participants. Bishop Ita chaired the meeting.

The conference opened with reports on ecumenical activities in various dioceses and reached its highest pitch in a discussion of common communion just before adjournment--leaving the feeling that this is an issue of utmost importance that must be tackled more adequately in the near future.

"Salvation Today" was stressed by the Bishop in introductory remarks in which he raised the question of how deliverance from sin can be related to the contemporary situation, marked as it is by prejudice and other social evils.

This year's reports showed considerably more widespread local ecumenical participation than last year. Activities include Sodepax-related groups, study centers on danchi problems in Kyoto and Tokyo; urban-industrial mission studies in Fukuoka; Living Room Dialogues in Kobe; the Academy Movement in Sendai, Kyoto and Tokyo; gatherings of school educators, Bible scholars; prayer meetings; Christmas celebrations; anti-Yasukuni action; social welfare efforts; a Christian cemetery.

Kumazawa, who last August attended the WCC Faith and Order Commission meeting in Belgium, explained how at present leading Protestant writers see mission primarily as God's saving work in the whole of humanity and the role of the church as an answer to this work. Accordingly, he said, ecumenism should be concerned not so much with the events and developments of the past as with the common vocation of the whole people of God for the future of mankind.

Lee spoke particularly on the mission of "Justice and Service," citing poverty in the Southern half of the world and the widening gap between wealthy countries and developing countries. He pointed to discrimination against Koreans living in Japan in the application of the law, vocational possibilities, veteran pensions and education. Each person experiences respect for the nobility of his race in his own country, he said, but what is sought is the same recognition and respect anywhere in "our own world."

THE DILEMMA OF THE WORKER IN THE PLANT THAT PRODUCES POLLUTION by Chikara Terada

On Oct. 9-10, the 8th annual meeting of "The Christian Unionists Association" was held in Kyoto on the theme, "How can labor unions fight pollution?" The 28 participants came from Akita in the north to Kagoshima in the south. Some were members of Sohyo Union, some of Domei. Although there were some differences in thinking with regard to labor problems, to be able to meet beyond the boundaries of organizations and discuss problems freely was, it was agreed, the importance of such a meeting.

The central issue discussed was the fact that labor unions are not fighting pollution and the question of why. We asked ourselves, Why is this so? Do we really intend to fight it? Is it that it isn't really our problem?

We always tend to make excuses for our inability to fight, saying "we are already overburdened with labor union responsibilities," or "we don't know enough" or "we haven't yet grappled with the matter," or "big corporation labor unions are limited in what they can do." But isn't it really a case not of our being unable to struggle against pollution but rather that we want to evade the issue?

When several young women distributed leaflets urging people to pursue the responsibility of the Showa Denko Company in the recent Minamata disease incident in Niigata, the labor union joined hands with the company in putting pressure on them to stop. The lesson learned there is that when the labor union tries to evade the struggle, it relinquishes its real right as a labor union.

When the labor union loses its stance of struggling, the workers do not try to protect their own rights; they merely operate on the basis of their own egoistic self interest. When these labor unions have no concern for the conditions of temporary workers, migrant workers, workers in subcontracting firms or domestic industries, how can we expect that they will struggle against pollution?

Our discussion also dealt with the emergence of the computer and the resulting thought control. Intensive rationalization is taking place; everyone is becoming a number. At our places of work, even where labor standardization laws are ignored, workers have no desire to struggle. This shows the degree to which the very hairs of Samson's head have been shorn by thought control. Until now, the severer the blow, the severer the struggle, but nowadays, workers retreat. In such a situation, it is impossible to fight pollution.

Laborers, as laborers, are already injured parties, but when they work at plants that produce pollution and know that they should report this but do not do so, they are not the injured ones but the assailants. Those in mass communication and education too are, we must remember, assailants.

Furthermore, mikaiho buraku people and Koreans living in Japan accuse laborers in general of discrimination. If we overlook this accusation that as Japanese and as laborers we are assailants, it will be impossible to put forth a strong position on pollution. If we only think in terms of our being the injured ones, our egoism will increase and we will concentrate only on protecting our organization.

In such a situation how then can we struggle? As individuals we are limited in the extent we can grapple with this. What is demanded is that even if we are only one, we must take a fighting posture toward it. The main thing is not whether the organization struggles or not, but the quality of struggle. We can not say that to thoughtlessly ignore the established structures is the best way. What is necessary is to educate the individuals within the established organizations.

This is the content of the meeting that at times was the scene of fierce disagreement and at other times the scene of warm agreement and sympathy with one another's position.

PEACEMAKING AT CLOSE RANGE

Suddenly, in the midst of his preaching to the 30 members of Iwakuni Higashi Church, the Rev. Mr. Shigeiko Taguchi, resorts to pantomime as another military jet takes off from the neighboring Iwakuni U.S. Marine Base, its roar explosive burst absorbing all other sounds. Jet fighters take off constantly from the 3,000-meter runway, usually turning right immediately toward the Inland Sea, their tails pointing directly toward Higashi Church.

Higashi Church was started some twenty years ago as an extention of Iwakuni Church to serve laborers who reside in the area. Here, along the sea, many major industries settled, although recently some have moved due to the many restrictions imposed upon them because of their proximity to the military base.

The recent erection of permanent concrete barracks testifies to the fact that Iwakuni is destined to remain a major U.S. Marine base, with a complement of 7,000 or more Marines stationed there for the indefinite future. And there are always rumors to the effect that members of the Japanese Self Defense Forces are also on the base.

In front of the modest Japanese Inn where the writer spent the night--and therefore not conspicuous--a couple of expensive cars with SDF license plates were parked; from inside could be heard loud English conversation with occasional friendly laughter.

In the United States most, if not all, military camps are located in remote areas removed from the general residential areas. But in Japan, most U.S. military bases are located in the midst of the lives of the Japanese people. People live alongside the fences of the base. Young girls cannot avoid walking down the streets beside the base, where special entertainment for servicemen abounds.

It is no wonder that, with the exception of Japanese who make money because of the bases, there exist among the residents of the neighborhood both implicit and explicit feelings against the base. This kind of personnel sentiment becomes the soil in which are sown and cultivated the seeds of the more sophisticated, politically and ideologically oriented movements against military bases--Japanese or U.S.--and against the U.S. Japan Security Treaty. The general citizenry gives support to several anti-base groups that have come in from the outside--from other parts of Japan and from overseas.

Church people are not generally ideologically nor politically inclined; they are idealistic and committed to the task of peacemaking, and this leads them to express their solidarity with other groups who in their judgment, are committed to overthrowing military force to bring in the desired "peace."

Meanwhile--the feelings of the Japanese notwithstanding--7,000 American boys are stationed at Iwakuni, many of them against their wishes. Strict Marine regulations do not allow them to have their families with them. Recent experiences in the Indo-China War have raised serious doubts in their minds about their own involvement. An increasing number are participating in underground movements; some are seeking CO status; some even try to desert. But there are also many who are fulfilling the duties placed upon them.

All of these men need pastoral care. In response to this need, the Ministry to Service Personnel in East Asia (MSPEA) of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. in cooperation with The National Christian Council of Japan, has for the past several years supported the Iwakuni Servicemen's Center, located about 50 meters outside the main gate of the Iwakuni Marine Base.

PEACEMAKING AT CLOSE RANGE (continued)

Set among the restaurants and bars of the area, the Center offers a neat Japanese garden with a two-story building that boasts a reading room, coffee bar, several bridge tables, ping-pong, a Japanese-style room and a counselling room. The clean, officers' club-like Center is directed by a reserve Navy chaplain, the Rev. Karl Karpa, with a staff of seven Japanese, three of whom are part-time. Many lonely Marines visit this 'home away from home' to relax, enjoy a dinner, or excursions or chess or cultural discussions.

But the future of the Center has come into question since last spring, when the MSPEA sent a team to appraise this Center, along with similar ones in Okinawa, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Bangkok. One reason for the appraisal is declining financial support among U.S. churches; another is lack of information about the Center's program. But more basic is the question raised by the pastors of five congregations in the Iwakuni area--one Baptist and four Kyodan, (one of the latter a United Methodist Missionary).

The Iwakuni Five's concern over the American boys on the base was stimulated anew recently by the boys' visits to the pastors' churches counselling on various subjects.

Last year the Rev. Mr. Kensaku Iwai of the Iwakuni Church had initiated discussions in English with Japanese young people. But when someone started snapping pictures, the boys stopped coming. Later, word reached the pastor that the boys had been told not to visit Iwai's place. This and other incidents led the Iwakuni Five to feel that there was a real need for pastoral counselling to be available off the base, and Karpa agreed. The ministry, they said, should include draft counselling.

Following the spring visit of the appraisal team, the NCCJ and the MSPEA exchanged memorandums with regard to the supervision, program and support of the Center, and differences in viewpoint were further discussed when NCC General Secretary John M. Nakajima was in New York in June, but no conclusions have been reached.

Nakajima explains the difficulties as follows:

- 1) The meaning of the military chaplaincy is interpreted differently by the average Japanese Christian and by the U.S. churches in their official position, and this difference is related, in turn to differences in regard to the issue of church and state. This results in differing points of view about having a chaplain on the administrative board of the Center.
- 2) The MSPEA members are convinced that the Iwakuni Five are interested only in counselling with regard to military service, an impression left by their interview with the Iwakuni men in April.

The Iwakuni Five insist that they are interested in the total range of pastoral care--including recreation, marriage, religious and psychiatric counselling, with counselling on military service problems a small but essential part.

- 3) The Japanese mistrust the MSPEA approach in which the handling of Servicemen's Centers is closely related to the military chaplaincy, feeling that MSPEA members may all be "hawkish" in their thinking.
- 4) There is a possibility that the ministry to U.S. service personnel may be interpreted by that portion of Japanese Christians who opposed the Christian Pavilion at Expo '70 as cooperation with U.S. military policy and what they describe as the "exploitive capitalistic system."

Meanwhile, today the jets continue to take off, and thousand of American boys continue to stroll down the streets of Iwakuni as they will tomorrow, and in the days that follow.

HEADLINE-MAKING EVENTS

BETTER THAN A SOAP OPERA WAS THE DAILY VIEW OF The Emperor and Empress's 18-day friendship trip to seven European countries, with a stopover in Anchorage.

A JOINT STRUGGLE TO OVERTHROW THE SATO CABINET in the "Okinawa Session" of the Japanese Diet that began Oct. 18 will be waged by the three opposition parties--JSP, Komeito and DSP. 15 groups, including JSP and Sohyo labor union established a central office to oppose ratification of the present Okinawa treaty and demand unconditional reversion.

MITI MINISTER TANAKA AND U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY KENNEDY initiated a three-year government agreement imposing quota controls on Japanese exports of synthetic and woolen textiles to the U.S., capping negotiations on Oct. 13. All textile businessmen joined opposition-parties in calling it "humiliating diplomacy" that disregards the Diet's earlier resolution.

A "NEW STAR" IN THE SKIES IS THE FIRST JAPANESE SCIENTIFIC observation satellite, Shinsei, boosted into orbit from the Tokyo University Space Center in Kagoshima.

SEPT CONSUMER PRICE INDEX HIT 10.3% HIGHER THAN Sept. of last year in the steepest rise since Feb. 1954, according to Statistics Bureau announcement Oct. 1.

27-YEAR OLD SUMO GRANDCHAMPION TAMANOUMI DIED SUDDENLY Oct. 11 of a heart attack following surgery.

NAOYA SHIGA, CALLED THE "GOD OF THE NOVELIST" died Oct. 21 of pneumonia at age 88.

TAKEO MIKI, LDP PAST FOREIGN MINISTER, SEVERELY CRITICIZED Prime Minister Sato on the recent admission of Red China to the UN saying, "It is not a matter of whether we win or are defeated. The issue is the government's basic foreign policy, in which it tried to maneuver the majority votes without any consideration of the present changing world situation.... It is manifestly clear that Sato's foreign policy is stagnant.... Were he a true politician he would be sensitive to his political responsibility." The same sentiment has been expressed by a considerable number of LDP members, to say nothing of opposition parties.

... compiled by Ichiji Yokota